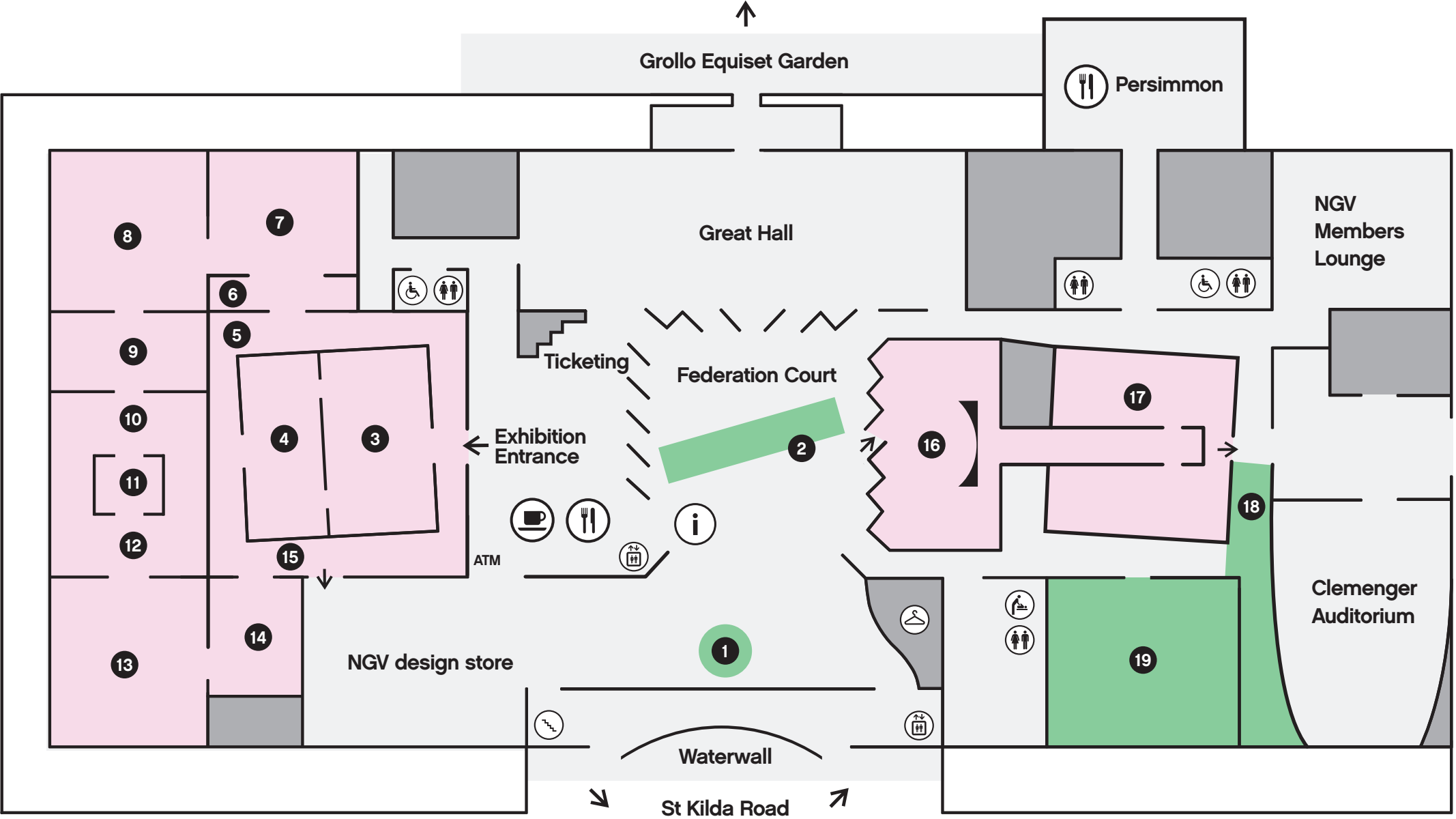


Andy Warhol — Ai Weiwei

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Andy Warhol | Ai Weiwei explores the influence of two of the most consequential artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries on modern art and contemporary life, focusing on the parallels and intersections between their practices. Surveying the scope of both artists' careers, the exhibition presents more than 300 works, including major new commissions, immersive installations and a wide representation of painting, sculpture, film, photography, publishing and social media.

Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei have each redefined the identity and role of the artist in society. Parallels also exist between the ways in which both artists have transformed our understanding of studio production and artistic value. Both are also renowned for their engagement with media and communications, and for the cultivation of celebrity and their own persona, in order to speak to social contexts beyond the world of art.

The exhibition is a dialogue between artists from different cultural contexts encompassing 'a tale of two cities' – New York and Beijing. *Andy Warhol | Ai Weiwei* reflects the time and place of the artist through the activities of two exemplary figures: one representing twentieth-century modernity and the 'American century'; the other our twenty-first century moment and what has been postulated as the 'Chinese century' to come.

1

Chandelier with Restored Han Dynasty Lamps for the Emperor, 2015

Chandelier with Restored Han Dynasty Lamps for the Emperor, 2015, is a new work in a series of light installations and chandelier forms that Ai Weiwei has produced since 2002. It is inspired by an antique Han dynasty lamp said to represent eternal life.

2

Forever Bicycles, 2015

The assembly and replication of almost 1500 bicycles in Ai's *Forever Bicycles* series, ongoing since 2003, promotes an intensely spectacular effect. 'Forever' is a popular brand of mass-produced bicycles manufactured in China since the 1940s, a type desired by Ai as a child, and also linked to China's early socialist society.

3

Icons and iconoclasm

In this gallery we are introduced to Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei through their engagement with self-portraiture and self-representation, and through some of their most iconic, performative and iconoclastic works.

4

Photography: New York / Beijing

Andy Warhol fanatically recorded his everyday life on audiotape, celluloid and photographic film. His photographs of the 1970s and 1980s provide an intimate insight into his social world. They also show his keen observation of the urban life, architecture, advertising, popular culture and personalities of his adopted New York City. Ai Weiwei lived in New York for a decade from 1983, and his *New York Photographs* document the young artist's social context as part of the city's Chinese artistic and intellectual diaspora community, his participation on the margins of the New York art world, and his commitment to social activism.

5

Silver Clouds and Cow Wallpaper

Andy Warhol's *Silver Clouds* were first exhibited at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, in 1966, along with *Cow Wallpaper* in an adjacent gallery. Propelled by air currents, the floating pillow forms displace the work of art from the walls of the gallery into space itself, creating an immersive experience. Warhol's *Cow Wallpaper* presents the serial production and the repetition of found pop-cultural imagery at spectacular scale.

6

Drawings

Andy Warhol's and Ai Weiwei's practices, like those of many artists, began with a strong interest in drawing, with a focus here upon Warhol's drawings of the 1950s and Ai's from the late 1970s.

7

Duchamp and the readymade

The enigmatic French artist and pioneer of conceptual art Marcel Duchamp looms large in the art of both Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei. Duchamp himself appears in Warhol's *Screen Test: Marcel Duchamp*, 1964–65, and in Ai's *Hanging Man*, 1985/2009, in which the French artist's profile is fashioned from a coat hanger, in the form of a question mark.

8

Flowers

Flowers in Western art history have symbolised love, death, sexuality, nobility, sleep and transience. In Chinese culture flowers also carry rich and auspicious symbolic meanings; from wealth and social status to beauty, reflection and enlightenment. The flower is a recurrent motif in Andy Warhol's work, and figures repeatedly in the work of Ai Weiwei, from his celebrated *Sunflower Seeds* of 2010 to a new installation, *Blossom*, 2015, composed of thousands of delicate white flowers created in the finest traditions of Chinese porcelain production.

9

Life on film

Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei have both engaged experimental filmmaking to explore the scale, rhythm and urban life of New York and Beijing, respectively. Rather than capturing fleeting experiences, both artists have documented these cities through long-form films which serve as time capsules of urban life in periods of rapid transition.

10

Celebrity

Andy Warhol had a keen understanding of what might be achieved in 'fifteen minutes of fame' and actively cultivated celebrity. Warhol's celebrity portraits are among his most renowned works, and – along with his Polaroid photographs – chronicle his relationships with artists, socialites, celebrities, fashion designers, art collectors and friends.

11

Letgo Room, 2015

Composed of more than three million plastic building blocks, Ai Weiwei's *Letgo Room, 2015*, is a new installation featuring portraits of Australian activists, advocates and champions of human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of information and the internet.

12

Cultural Revolutions

Andy Warhol's Mao series addresses the cult of personality surrounding the communist leader. Along with portraits of Lenin and other political figures, these works highlight the influence of towering political figures at the height of the Cold War, as well as the basis of their fame in the repetition of their images. In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, avant-garde artists in China embraced a wide range of aesthetic positions, including pop and postmodern critiques of socialist realism, to recalibrate the historical images and propaganda that had preceded them.

13

The Individual and the State

The relationship between individual freedom and the power of the state is a subject of relevance to both Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei. In 1963, Warhol began exploring the electric chair as a motif, an image which remains a potent symbol of state disciplinary power. As an artist and human rights activist committed to freedom of expression, Ai Weiwei has been a longstanding advocate of individual acts of resistance against state, political or corporate power. Ai's irrepressible impulse to defy the omnipotence of state authority is illustrated both symbolically, through his art, and through courageous acts of political activism.

14

Exploding Plastic Inevitable

Andy Warhol's expanded cinema and multimedia performance the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, featuring legendary rock group The Velvet Underground and Nico, was a sensory assault – an immersive sound-and-light environment involving numerous collaborators.

15

Caonima Style

This new wallpaper design and accompanying floating balloon works have been developed by Ai Weiwei specifically for this exhibition, in response to Warhol's *Silver Clouds* and *Cow Wallpaper*. *Caonima* – the Chinese characters translate as 'Grass Mud Horse' – is a Chinese colloquialism for alpaca. The image of the Grass Mud Horse, here accompanied by the Twitter bird, was popularised on the internet by Chinese internet users as an expression of discontent and a subversive double entendre – used in place of an expletive – to mock government censorship.

16

Narrative, myth and memory

Myths – from ancient parables of gods to contemporary tales of cartoon characters – are shared stories used to explain cultural customs and historical events. Andy Warhol's *Myth* series presents archetypes of twentieth-century American popular culture. Ai Weiwei examines myths associated with the Chinese zodiac. His *Circle of Heads (in Gold)* reinterprets twelve bronze animal heads that once stood in the gardens of Yuanmingyuan, an imperial retreat in Beijing.

17

The studio: Factory and FAKE

Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei have each transformed our understanding of the role of the studio and artistic production. Warhol's 'Silver Factory' was legendary for bringing together artists and poets, filmmakers and musicians, bohemians and intellectuals, 'superstars', 'drag queens' and socialites, as well as for the serial production of silkscreen paintings, films, video, music and publications. Known as 258 FAKE, Ai's self-designed studio in Caochangdi, on the north-eastern outskirts of Beijing, is renowned for its interdisciplinary approach and post-industrial modes of production as well as for its innovative, experimental approach to materials and technologies. Ai also plays host to teams of researchers and craftspeople, architects, designers and archivists, activists and assistants, and is known for his strategic use of social media. A selection of books, films, music, television programs and social media is complemented in these galleries by interactive touch-screens providing access to Andy Warhol's wider filmography, and an extensive selection of films, videos and documentaries by and about Ai Weiwei.

18

Andy Warhol | Ai Weiwei pop-up shop

NGV presents an inspired range of merchandise for *Andy Warhol | Ai Weiwei*. Produced in consultation with the Ai Weiwei Studio, Andy Warhol Museum, and Andy Warhol Foundation, and designed exclusively for the, the range features works by both artists and contemporary designs including t-shirts, caps, jewellery, socks, tote bags, an exciting cat range for kids, Ai Weiwei and Andy Warhol inspired toys and sleep masks, souvenir teaspoons, and much more.

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Studio Cats: Andy Warhol | Ai Weiwei for Kids

Did you know Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei both share a love of cats? Children and families are invited to learn about two of today's most influential artists, and their feline friends, at the NGV's children's exhibition, *Studio Cats*. The large-scale installation features artwork displays, multimedia and hands-on activities.